3: Fulop--1 E-5 (1953) 1954 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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Aspects of Tukano /Tucano/ Culture: Cosmogony

by Marcos Fulop

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[122] /Page 98 is blank./

/99/ Commissioned by the Dirección of the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, we are initiating ethnographic studies among the natives of the Comisaría Especial del Vaupes. We have considered it convenient to begin the anthropological study of the cultures of this region with the Tukano /Tucano/ group.

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[101] The material that is published below was gathered during our stay in the settlement of Guadalajara, on the Paca River, from June 13 to July 9, 1953. Our informant was Marcos Sierra, 124 and Manuel Sierra, the brother of the preceding, served as interpreter. Owing to the short time of the investigation and to having consulted only one informant, we are not able to guarantee the exactitude of the version of the Tukano cosmogony given by Marcos Sierra. This cosmogony is repeated in the manner of a cult to the ancestors during the feasts of Dabukurí and Yuruparí.

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[171] The Tukano culture is actually representative of the cultures of the tropical forests of South America. Their regimen of life is sedentary; they practice horticulture, and bitter yuca (1)

1. Manihot utilissima.

constitutes the basis of their alimentation, which is supplemented with products obtained by means of hunting and fishing; they are efficient in the construction and handling of river vessels; they use the hammock for a bed; they possess the art of ceramics and do not know metalurgy.

• 131 The Tukano Indians are found located on the lower Vaupés /Uaupés/ River, from the falls of Ipanoré to the outlet of the Vaupés into the Río Negro; on the Tiquié and Papurí /Papury/ rivers; and on small streams that empty into these three rivers.

• 131 /99 cont./
167 As is seen, the Tukano group is found distributed both in Colombian territory and Brazilian, and the migratory movements of natives between these two countries are quite frequent.

241 The Tukano work the land by means of the slash-and-burn
[462] method. The piece of ground intended for agriculture is always cleaned of underbrush and trees by the /100/ men, a job at which each man works individually or assisted by his male
[412] relatives. At one time, before the arrival of the Creole rubber
[177] workers in the region, the trees and underbrush were cut with stone axes, but since the arrival of the rubber worker the machete has been introduced, and today no Tukano Indian would consider using the lithic instrument again.

Trees of great size are generally left in the place in which they fell, but small trees and bushes are burned toward the end of summer, or the dry season. The ashes obtained from the burning are used as fertilizer to improve the soil, but owing to the thin vegetal layer, to erosion, and to the general poorness of the land, the Tukano Indian is obliged to select and clear a
[242] new garden every three or four years. The method of crop rotation is not practiced because the forest vegetation rapidly returns to invade the land that is not cultivated and tended. The field under cultivation rarely exceeds one or two hectares.

[412] The planting is done immediately after finishing the burning, among the stumps of the felled trees and the trunks of the toppled trees. Probably the only aboriginal implement used in the planting is the planter's stick (2),

2. Digging-stick /this term is given in English/.

which is used primarily to loosen the earth and to open holes in it for planting seeds or young plants. The ground is rarely cultivated and tended after the planting is done, but weeds are pulled out and care is taken that the forest does not invade the garden.

/40 cont./

On the Apapóris (13)

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• [131]

13. It must be a mistake by Wallace; one is not dealing with the Apapóris (tributary of the Japurá), but with the Papurí River (tributary of the Uaupés), where the Tukano, Pirá-tapúya, and Desāna tribes actually have their main nuclei.

River: 19. Tucano; 20. Uacará (garça); 21. Pirá (fish); 22. Deçana.

On the Querirí (Cuiarí or Iquiarí) (14)

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14. Bento Aranha (in the Archivo do Amazonas, Year II, No. 5, p. 2), in answer to a letter from Koch Grünberg, records Iquiarí as another name of the river Içana: "in the same manner as they call Iquiarí the river Içana or Issana. /The final quotation marks are missing./

At present the river Içana is not known under any other denomination. And no river in the region is known under the name of Iquiarí. Under that of Quiarí, yes, there exists a tributary of the left bank of the Aiarí, which, in turn, is a tributary of the right bank of the Içana. Likewise there is no river under the denomination of Querirí in the region. Perhaps the spelling was Querarí, which is a tributary of the left bank of the Uaupés, on the Colombian border. Caduiari is one of the tributaries of the Querarí; and Cuiarí, one of the tributaries of the left of the Içana (cf. above II-3, "Ethnographic Information," on Yaquiri and Quiquiari /see p. 27 /).

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5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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Thus, if we are to answer the evolutionary question of how complex social systems develop we shall have to turn to a more thorough study of social structures. In this respect, the Cubeo, who inhabit the northwest corner of the Amazon Basin, offer an example of a social structure with "advanced" features of integration and hierarchy that have, however, never quite taken hold. 121 [131]

Tropical forest life is not so much sylvan as it is riverine. The rivers facilitate the ceaseless flow of peoples, of splinters of communities, and of tribes along an intricate water network that binds together a virtual subcontinent. Thus, in the Amazon Basin one finds cultural traits and languages far from their ancestral sources. Not only are tropical forest cultures composite, but occasionally the tribes themselves are made up of ethnically and linguistically distinct segments. Along the river routes there are few barriers. Tribes that have adapted themselves to one corner of the basin have little difficulty in adjusting to a new location a thousand miles or more away, for even where ecologies differ the changes are neither abrupt nor drastic. Forest peoples moving on to the plains along the Orinoco Basin, for example, still have the familiar river and sylvan pattern along the river edges. Climate, vegetation, and fauna are everywhere about the same. The ease of movement and the similarity of environment account for the deposition of a common groundwork upon which all Amazon cultures are built.

One of the features of the common groundwork that defines the tropical forest as a major culture area includes slash-burn horticulture with bitter manioc as the principal but by no means the only crop. Bitter manioc offers a high yield per acre but it exhausts the soil after three to five years and demands, therefore, some kind of community circulation in which people move on, or recirculate within, a fixed zone, until new forest growth has replenished the soil. Bitter manioc, a perennial, grows readily in the Amazon Basin, but it demands a complex and time-consuming procedure for removing its poisonous prussic acid content. Manioc cultivation is almost everywhere women's work. Thus it sets a common pattern of sexual division of labor as well as a basic technology. Along the margins of the Andes, maize supplants or supplements manioc as the food crop and sets its own patterns. Maize, for example, may be regarded as a masculine crop, in which case its cultivation is more readily ritualized. But whether maize or manioc is the staple of plant diet, the tropical forest tribes, with the exception of many Ge-speaking peoples, are given over to chicha, a beer of manioc, maize, or other carbohydrate plants. Almost

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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of the pull of propinquity. The Cubeo welcome and respect neighborliness.

The river has its natural boundaries. These are the segments of river demarcated by rapids and by the tributaries or creeks. A boundary is from one such feature to the next, from a *cachoeira* (rapids) to a creek, from a creek to a creek, but rarely from *cachoeira* to *cachoeira*. A boundary defines only sib territory. There is no phratric territory as such. If there is phratric and tribal territoriality it is because each of the sibs undertakes to defend the principle in terms of its own interests. A sib may adopt a stranger and in this way incorporate it into the phratry. It needs no permission to do this. On the other hand, a sib may appeal to phratry mates for help in warding off by force unwanted intruders. Boundaries do not close a river to traffic. The river is always an open highway for travel, and travelers may fish and hunt along it freely. They may not put up fixed installations such as weirs or show other signs of residence such as fishing a particular spot with regularity without permission. Men regularly fish only within the sib limits. The discussion of boundaries, it should be explained, does not flow naturally from the Cubeo. It is drawn out by the ethnographer. The Cubeo are not jealous of boundaries and they rarely have issues over them, but they do know them. Occasionally someone violates the common law of courtesy of the use of fish weirs and keeps the barrier closed beyond the allowable period. The Cubeo cannot and do not attribute this unmannerly act to gluttony. Gluttony is an incomprehensible notion to them. They attribute it either kindly to forgetfulness, in which case there is no issue, or to unfriendliness, in which case there is a quarrel and an effort is made to tear down the barrier. On the forest side there are no boundaries at all except for the clearing itself. It is not land but river frontage that is valued.

CANOEING

So much of a man's time is spent in a canoe that no description of native life would be complete that did not relate the Indian to the river as a canoeman or that failed to bring out the motor rhythms of canoeing. Motor rhythms are patterned, the rhythm of paddling and the characteristic rhythms of the dance showing particularly striking parallels.

Paddling follows a definite though irregular rhythm. The prowsman on a long trip is keeper of the stroke. Paddling is noisy. On the downstroke the stem of the paddle just above the blade is struck

7: Sorensen E-5 (1959-1963) 1967
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101 large, homogeneous cultural group in the center of what is identified in the literature as the Northwest Amazon culture area. (For culture area descriptions, see Steward 1946–1959, Goldman 1948, Murdock 1958, Steward and Faron 1959, and Galvão 1960.) There is historical as well as traditional evidence that some of these tribes may have originated outside of the Vaupés area, subsequently acculturating to the general central Northwest Amazon culture. Other tribes seem to have originated locally, from proliferation by fission. Koch-Grünberg (1909–1910), for instance, considers the Wanano newcomers (among others). Although it has not been especially noted in the literature, some tribes present social organizations that are atypical for the area. The Piratapuyo, for instance, retain moieties, which until recently functioned as exogamous intermarrying units in an otherwise tribally exogamous and moiety-lacking culture area. Goldman (1963), who noted multilingualism, also reports on the diverse origin of various sibs among the Kubeo. On the other hand, field notes on the Tuyuka-Yurutí (or Dochkapúra-Uaiana [the *Uaikana* are the Piratapuyo]) set of tribes and languages suggest their derivation from a common source.

174 101 [616]

101 [131] A couple of the larger tribes do not live in one continuous area, but in several areas. The numerous Tukano tribe occupies several continuous stretches of the Vaupés River and its principal tributaries, the Tikié and the Papurí, and also sites at the mouths of tributaries to these rivers. Historically, they have exerted

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